

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 SSC-01 AID-05 TRSE-00 EUR-12
/079 W

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O R 011430Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3032
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BANJUL POUCH
AMEMBASSY BISSAU POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DAKAR 1558

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SHUM, SG
SUBJECT: SENGHOR WINS SENEGALESE ELECTIONS WITH 82
PERCENT OF VOTE

REF DAKAR 1494

1. SUMMARY: SENGHOR'S PARTI COICIALISTE (PS) WON 82 PERCENT
OF SENEGALESE VOTE IN FEBRUARY 26 ELECTIONS, WHILE ABDOULAYE
WADE'S OPPOSITION PARTI DEMOCRATIQUE SENEGALAIS (PDS)
EARNED 17 SEATS IN 100-MEMBER NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY. SENEGALESE OFFICIALS SEE ELECTION AS VOTE FOR
"STABILITY IN CONTINUITY" AND EVIDENCE OF ELECTORATE'S
"MATURITY." OPPOSITION WILL PROBABLY CHALLENGE IN COURT
ALLEGED WIDESPREAD ABUSES BY OVERZEALOUS LOCAL PARTY
MILITANTS, BUT WADE HAS ABSOLVED TOP PS LEADERSHIP FROM
ANY FRAUDULENT INTENT, AND MAJHMOUT DIOP OF PARTI AFRICAINE
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DE L'INDEPENDENCE (PAI) POINTS OUT THAT PS WOULD HAVE
WON IN ANY CASE. TURNOUT OF 62 PERCENT OF REGISTERED
VOTERS IS NOT PARTICULARLY HIGH, BUT PUBLIC APATHY,
CONFUSION OVER ELECTION PROCEDURES, AND OFFICIAL EFFORTS
TO CURTAIL BALLOT STUFFING AND VOTING BY PROXY WERE
PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT FACTORS THAN CALL FOR BOYCOTT
ISSUED BY LEFTIST OPPOSITION LEADERS OUTSIDE LEGAL

PARTIES. ELECTION MAY HAVE HELPED TO ALV ANIZE GOVERNING
PS INTO STRONGER ORGANIZATION BETTER ABLE TO HELP GUIDE
TRANSITION TO SENGHOR'S EVENTUAL SUCCESSOR. END SUMMARY.

2. UNOFFICIAL ELECTION TOTALS GIVE PRESIDENT SENGHOR
82 PERCENT AND ABDOULAYE WADE 17 PERCENT OF 967,000
BALLOTS CAST. SAME PERCENTAGES PREVAILED FOR SENGHOR'S
PS AND WADE'S PDS IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTION, WITH MAJHMOUT
DIOP'S PAI WINNING LESS THAN ONE PERCENT. THIS SHOULD
RESULT IN ENTRY OF TOP 17 CANDIDATES ON PS SLATE (SEE DAKAR A-15)
INTO NEW 100-SEAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (WHILE THOSE BELOW NUMBER
83 ON PS LIST WILL BE ELIMINATED). PDS RAN STRONGEST (WITH FROM
ONE-QUARTER TO NEARLY ONE-HALF OF VOTES) IN BELT RUNNING
THROUGH TIVAOUNE, BAMBEY AND SINE-SALOUM GROUNDNUT
BASIN, IN CASAMANCE DEPARTMENTS OF OUSSOUYE AND VELINGARA,
AND IN WADE'S HOMETOWN OF KEBEMER, AS EXPECTED, AND ALSO,
SURPRISINGLY, IN CAP VERT, PERHAPS DUE TO SPARSE TURNOUT
IN POLITICALLY BLASE DAKAR. PS SWEEPED MUNICIPAL
ELECTIONS, WITH EXCEPTION OF OUSSOUYE IN
CASAMANCE (THOUGH, CONTRARY TO INTIAL INDICATIONS, PS
APPARENTLY DID EDGBNOUT OPPOSITION IN OUSSOUYE PRESIDENTIAL
AND LEGISLATIVE POLLING).

3. BOTH WADE AND DIOP HAVE EXPRESSED PUBLIC
DISAPPOINTMENT THAT GOVERNMENT DID NOT TAKE STRONGER
MEASURES TO DETER FRAUD BY OVERZEALOUS PARTY
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MILITANTS. ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION PARTIES WERE
AUTHORIZED TO BE PRESENT INSIDE POLLING PLACES,
PAI WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY WELL ORGANIZED
TO BE WIDELY REPRESENTED, AND PDS IS GROUBLING THAT
PS MEMBERS PRESIDED OVER MOST VOTING BUREAUS ANDDD SOMETIMES
EXCULDED PDS OBSERVERSS. WASDE REPORTEDLY TOLD AFP
THAT PDS WOULD CHALLENGE DISPUTED ELECTION RESULTS IN
COURT.

4. COURT CHALLENGES ARE NOTHING NEW IN CONTEMPORARY
SENEGALESE POLITICS. PDS ALSO CONTESTED RESULTS OF
1976 MUNICIPAL AND RURAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS, AND
SUCCEEDED IN GETTING ELECTION IN KEBEMER
THROWN OUT (DAKAR A-015). GGVERNMENT-DIRECTED

LE SOLEIL, WHICH DUTIFULLY REPORTED OPPOSITION'S
POST-ELECTION COMPLAINTS, EDITORIALIZED THAT "ONE
MUST EXPECT, AS IS CUSTOMARY, A DELUGE OF CONTESTATIONS
AS VEHEMENT AS THEY ARE UNJUSTIFIED. IT'S ALL IN THE

GAME." PAPER CALLED COURT APPEALS "THE LAST
REFUGE OF LOSERS," BUT ARGURED THAT THEY DEMONSTRATED

"REALITY OF SENEGALESE DEMOCRACY" AND SENGHOR'S WILL
TO MAKE SENEGAL "A LAND OF LAW AND JUSTICE." PERHAPS
WADE'S CHARGES WILL HELP DISARM SKEPTICS WHO LONG
SUSPECTED THAT HE
WAS SECRETLY IN CAHOOTS WITH
SENGHOR RATHER THAN GENUINE OPPOSITION LEADER.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DAKAR 1558

5. NOVELTY OF ELECTIONS CONTESTED OPENLY BY MULTIPLE
PAIQIES AND UNFAMILIARITY OF PUBLIC WITH ELECTION
PROCEDURES UNDOUBTABLY DID CREATE FAIR AMOUNT OF

CONFUSION ON ELECTION DAY. MANY OF PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
STEM DIRECTLY FROM FUNDAMENTAL DIFFICULTY OF ORGANIZING
DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN PREDOMINANTLY ILLITERATE SOCIETY.
NEED FOR EACH VOTER TO REQUEST FROM POLLING PLACE
OFFICIALS A SEPARAEE BALLOT OF A DIFFERENT COLOR FOR
EACH PARTY, THE PRESENCE OF THREE SEPARATE
VOTING BOXES (FOR PRESIDENTIAL, LEGISLATIVE AND
FUNICIPAL CONTESTS), AND THE ABSENCE OF A LEGAL
OBLIGATION FOR VOTERS TO CAST VOTE IN PRIVATE ALL
CONTRIBUTED TO LIKELIHOOD OF ABUSE.

6. STILL, THIS WAS CULMINATION OF CAMPAIGN IN WHICH

GOVERNMENT BET OVER BACKWARDS TO GIVE CHALLENGERS
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EXPOSURE IN OFFICIAL MEDIA, FINANCED MOST OF THEIR
CAMPAIGN COSTS AND TOLERATED STRIDENT PRESS ATTACKS
FROM LEGAL AND ESPECIALLY ILLEGAL OPPOSITION. MOST
OBSERVERS WHO VISITED POLLING PLACES IN DAKAR SAW
ORDERLY-BUT TEDIOUS-VOTING PROCESS BEING CARRIED
OUT UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
COMPETING PARTIES. WADE REPORTEDLY OBSOLVED TOP PS
LEADERSHIP OF ANY FRAUDULENT INTENTION, AND ACKNOWLEDGED
TO PRESS THAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR JEAN COLLIN HAD
INTERVENED EACH TIME THE PDS REPORTED AN IRREGULARITY.
WHILE COMPLAINING OF NUMEROUS ELECTION ABUSES, PAI'S
DIOP HASTENED TO ADD: "I DON'T SAY THE PS WOULD NOT
HAVE WON."

7. PRESENT CALCULATION IS THAT 62 PERCENT OF 1.5

MILLION VOTERS WHO REGISTERED LAST SPRING WENT TO
POLLS. (THEY REPRESENT TOTAL POPULATION OF FIVE
MILLION.) THIS PERCENTAGE WILL INEVITABLY BE SUBJECT
TO CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS, GIVEN CALL BY
UNRECOGNIZED OPPOSITION LEADERS FOR ELECTION BOYCOTT.
IN POLITICALLY SUPERCHARGED LOUGA DEPARTMENT, FOR
EXAMPLE, 50,000 WERE REGISTERED, BUT ONLY 31,000
VOTED; ABDOULAYE WADE OFFERED PROVOCATIVE EXPLANATION
FOR LOUGA TURNOUT, SPECULATING THAT THERE HAD INITIALLY
BEEN MASSIVE MULTIPLE INSCRIPTIONS WITH FRAUDULENT
STATEMENT, BUT THAT EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT MEASURES
SUCCESSFULLY THWARTED THIS TACTIC ON ELECTION DAY.
IN NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW, MINISTER COLLIN SUMILARLY
SUGGESTED THAT RELATIVELY LOW PARTICIPATION RATE WAS
EXPLAINED BY "SCRUPULOUS RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF
THE PERSONAL VOTE" (WHICH, BY IMPLICATION, MIGHT HAVE
BEEN LESS RIGOROUSLY OBSERVED IN PREVIOUS SINGLE PARTY
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REFERENDA). COLLIN POINTED OUT THAT 62 PERCENT LEVEL
APPROXIMATED THAT OF WESTERN DEMOCRACIES, AND ARGUED
PLAUSIBLY THAT, GIVEN INNOVATIVE NATURE OF THIS YEAR'S
EXPERIMENT, FACT THAT CONTESTED ELECTIONS WERE HELD
ACROSS NATION WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT PROVIDED
EVIDENCE OF "MATURITY" OF SENEGALESE ELECTORATE.

8. LE SOLEIL CONCLUDED THAT SENEGALESE HAD REALIZED

THAT THEIR FUTURE LAY NOT IN "TOTALITARIAN DEMOCRACY
A LA CONAKRY" AS ESPOUSED BY PAI, NOR IN "THE VAGUE
TRAVAILLISTE-POPULISTE SYSTEM" PROPOSED BY PDS, BUT
IN "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM WHICH IS LINKED TO A BOLD
POLICY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
POLICY BASED ON THE EFFICACY OF THE
MEANS OF PRODUCTION AND RESPECT FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY."
SENEGALESE PREFERRED "STABILITY IN CONTINUITY" TO
"STAGNATION AND ADVENTURE."

9. EMBASSY HAS IMPRESSION THAT, IN CONTRAST TO
SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC APATHY, PS MILITANTS FOUND CONTESTED
CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION AN EXHILARATING EXPERIENCE WHICH
WORKED OUT ABOUT AS THEY HAD EXPECTED, BUT WHICH IN
THE PROCESS CHALLENGED AND ENLIVENED PS ORGANIZATION
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. IT HAS ALWAYS APPEARED THAT ONE
OF SENGHOR'S GOALS IN ENCOURAGING CAREFULLY LIMITED
MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY IN SENEGAL WAS TO SHAKE UP THE
PS AND REVITALIZE IT INTO AN ORGANIZATION SUFFICIENTLY
STRONG TO OUTLIVE HIS LEADERSHIP AND HELP GUIDE THE
TRANSITION TO HIS EVENTUAL SUCCESSOR. HE WILL
UNDOUBTEDLY TAKE SATISFACTION FROM HIS PARTY'S OVERALL
PERFORMANCE IN ELECTION JUST CONCLUDED.
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